

Claims 1 and 9: See paragraph 30, which provides, "In an embodiment, a bone tap may be used to prepare an opening in a bone for insertion of a bone fastener (e.g., a bone screw) . . . In some embodiments, a bone tap may include a passage and fenestrations for introducing bone cement into bone proximate a distal portion of the tap. The bone cement may augment fixation of a bone fastener."

Claims 10, 31, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, and 49: See paragraph 63, which provides, "After injection of bone cement 160 in region 162, bone tap 100 may be left in the bone for a chosen amount of time to allow the bone cement to begin to cure. In some embodiments, additional bone cement may be injected after bone tap 100 is partially withdrawn from the bone. Withdrawing the bone tap 100 and injecting additional cement one or more times may allow more complete filling of region 162 with bone cement 160."

Claim 23: Please see Figures 1-3 and 6. See also paragraph 30, which provides, "In an embodiment, a bone tap may be used to prepare an opening in a bone for insertion of a bone fastener (e.g., a bone screw) . . . In some embodiments, a bone tap may include a passage and fenestrations for introducing bone cement into bone proximate a distal portion of the tap. The bone cement may augment fixation of a bone fastener."

Claim 30: See paragraph 33, which provides, "bone tap 100 may include indicia."

Claims 33, 34 44, and 51: See paragraph 32, which provides, "[b]one tap 100 may include tool portion 108. Tool portion 108 may complement a portion of a tool (e.g., a driver) used to facilitate insertion of bone tap 100 into bone." See also paragraph 62, which provides, "Fenestrations 114 and flutes (if present) may allow bone cement to spread at least partially throughout region 162. Threading 104 proximal to fenestrations 114 may inhibit bone cement from migrating to areas outside the vertebra."

Claims 35, 43, and 50: Sec paragraph 9, which provides, “In some embodiments, a fenestrated bone tap may be used to introduce medicine (e.g., antibacterial agents), synthetic bone material, bone growth proteins and/or other substances into bone.” See paragraph 36, which provides, “Fluid delivered through bone tap 100 may include, but is not limited to, a gas, a liquid, an emulsion, or a suspension. For example, the fluid may be a medical adhesive, bone cement (e.g., polymethylmethacrylate), epoxy, bone healing substance, bone growth promotion substance (e.g., hydroxyapatite or bone morphogenic proteins), radio-opaque dye, medicine (e.g., antibacterial agents), or a combination thereof.”

Claim 36: See paragraph 32, which provides, “[b]one tap 100 may include tool portion 108. Tool portion 108 may complement a portion of a tool (e.g., a driver) used to facilitate insertion of bone tap 100 into bone.”

Claims 37, 45, and 52: See originally-filed claim 18, which provides, “wherein introducing fluid to the bone comprises coupling a fluid delivery system to the bone tap, and activating the fluid delivery system to move fluid through the bone tap and into the bone.”

Claims 46 and 53: See paragraph 64, which provides, “A driver may be coupled to the bone tap to facilitate removal of the bone tap from the vertebral body and pedicle.”

Summary

As requested by the Examiner, Applicants submit this Response to cite the subject matter support for the claim amendments submitted in the Amendment filed on April 11, 2007. Applicants respectfully submit that these citations do not limit the claims to the specific embodiments cited. Instead, these citations merely address the Examiner's Office Communication dated June 29, 2007.

Applicants respectfully request that the Amendment filed April 11, 2007, be entered. Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number indicated below with any questions or comments, or to otherwise facilitate expeditious prosecution of the application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the amount for any filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 as well as any patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R. §1.17 associated with this communication for which full payment had not been tendered to deposit account No. 01-0025.

Respectfully submitted,  
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